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NEW BEDFORD COMPANIES SUED FOR PCB CLEANUP COSTS

BOSTON---An amended lawsuit filed today seeks to recover several million dollars in past and future expenses incurred by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Coast Guard and other agencies to cleanup PCB contamination in New Bedford Harbor.

The suit was filed by the United States against six corporations under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, commonly known as Superfund. The defendants are AVX, Inc., Belleville Industries, Inc., Aerovox, Inc., the Federal Pacific Electric Company, Cornell-Dubilier Electronics Corporation, and FTE Corporation, which have operated one or the other of two capacitor manufacturing plants at various times on the Acushnet River in New Bedford.

The complaint alleges that the polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) were discharged into the harbor from the plants from the 1940s to the 1970s, directly and also by way of the municipal sewer. EPA and other federal agencies have already spent or committed more than \$3.5 million in order to develop appropriate remedies.

This new action amends a pending suit filed by the United States in December 1983 against the same corporations in behalf of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to recover damages for injury to natural resources caused by the release of PCBs. The suit also seeks an order requiring the defendants to remedy the PCB contamination.

EPA is conducting a remedial investigation and feasibility study which will lead to recommendations for long-term remedial action under Superfund. A fast-track feasibility study for dealing with the PCB hot spot in the Acushnet River above the Coggleshall Bridge has been completed, and alternative remedial actions are being reviewed as to engineering, scientific and financial feasibility.

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PCB contamination extends over about 18,000 acres of productive fishing and lobstering waters. There is a ban on fishing and lobstering in the contaminated area. Concentrations of PCBs in the harbor and estuary range up to 190,000 parts per million, or 19 percent.

Cornell-Dubilier and Aerovox agreed in 1982 to consent orders by EPA to clean up their respective properties as far as the water line. Cornell-Dubilier has completed its clean up and is now working to clean the sewer lines under a unilateral administrative order issued by EPA. Aerovox is still working on the clean up at its site.